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Former county commissioner competent to stand trial

Sean Rossman, Tallahassee Democrat 1:02 a.m. EST March 4, 2014



(Photo: Special)

Former Leon County Commissioner Dan Winchester was deemed competent to stand trial on domestic violence charges Monday morning.

Winchester, 49, who served on the County Commission from 1998 to 2006, will remain at the Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee until his trial date June 9. A recent evaluation found him competent but suggested Winchester should continue to be housed at Florida State Hospital, said Winchester's attorney Tim Jansen.

The agreement between Jansen and the State Attorney's Office was accepted by Circuit Judge James C. Hankinson.

"We believe, judge that he is competent at this point," Jansen said Monday morning. Winchester, who was not in court Monday, will have pretrial dates starting in May.

Winchester was arrested in 2009 and faces more than a dozen charges including domestic battery, battery, aggravated assault with a firearm, disorderly conduct, kidnapping, sexual battery and child abuse, according to court records.

According to Leon County Sheriff's Office officials, Winchester turned himself in after his wife said he wielded a small pistol during an argument and locked her in a utility closet on one occasion. When he let her out, officials say he slapped and yelled at her while wielding an iron pipe.

In Aug. of 2010, Circuit Judge Terry Lewis signed an order that found Winchester to be mentally incompetent and directing he be transferred to a mental health facility. At the time, Jansen said his client was not receiving proper treatment in jail and filed a motion for Winchester to be transported to a facility where he could be monitored.

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